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JAN
#7 IN A NINE-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES
SECRET WARS II
THE BEYONDER...
"AGAINST ALL EVIL!"

Beyond time, space, and the myriad dimensions lies another universe to which our own is as a droplet of water to the ocean. The One Who Is All in that other universe has learned of our universe and has come here to walk among us, that he might come to understand the essence of humanity.

The fragile Earth trembles beneath his feet, dreading his godlike omnipotence.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: SECRET WARS™ II

IN A DARK, INFERNAL DIMENSION, HIS SATANIC MAJESTY MEPHISTO BROODS.
AT HIS SIDE STANDS DEATH...
BEHOLD, BELOVED! THE VAPORS SHOW US THE ONE FROM BEYOND...TO WHOM ALL MY POWER IS AS NAUGHT!
AND YET, TO PROTECT YOU...I MUST DESTROY HIM!

CHARGE OF THE DARK BRIGADE!

JIM SHOOTER	AL MILGROM	STEVE LEIALOHA	ROSEN & FRIENDS	JULIANA FERRITER	BOB BUDIANSKY
SCRIPTER	PENCILER	INKER	LETTERS	COLORIST	EDITOR

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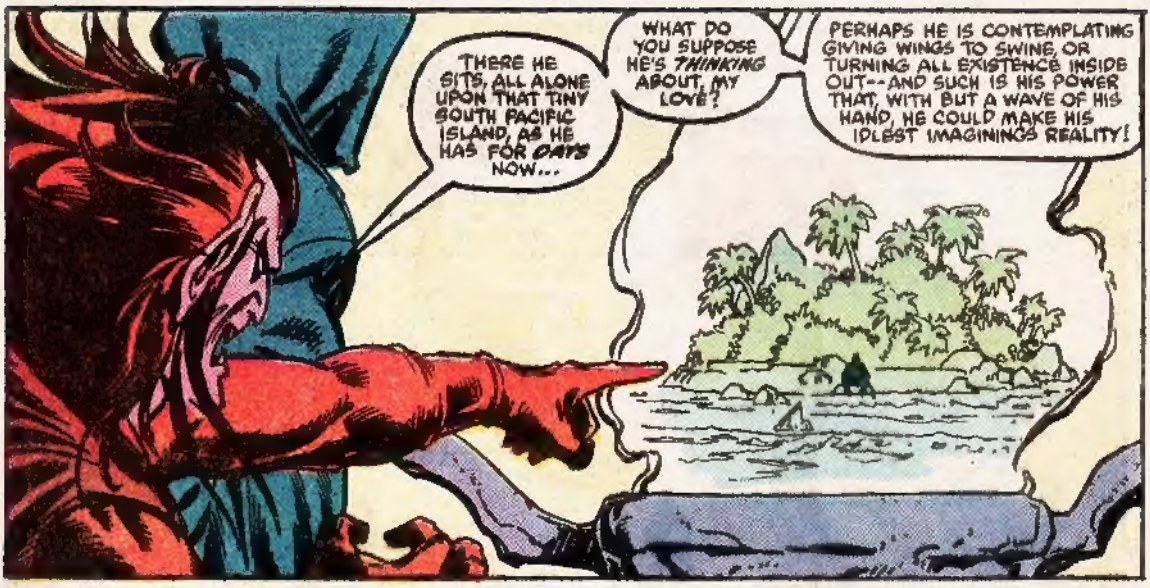
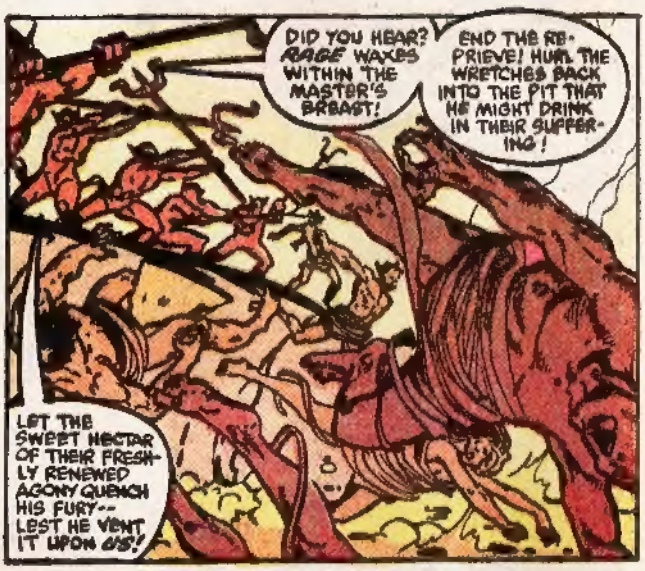
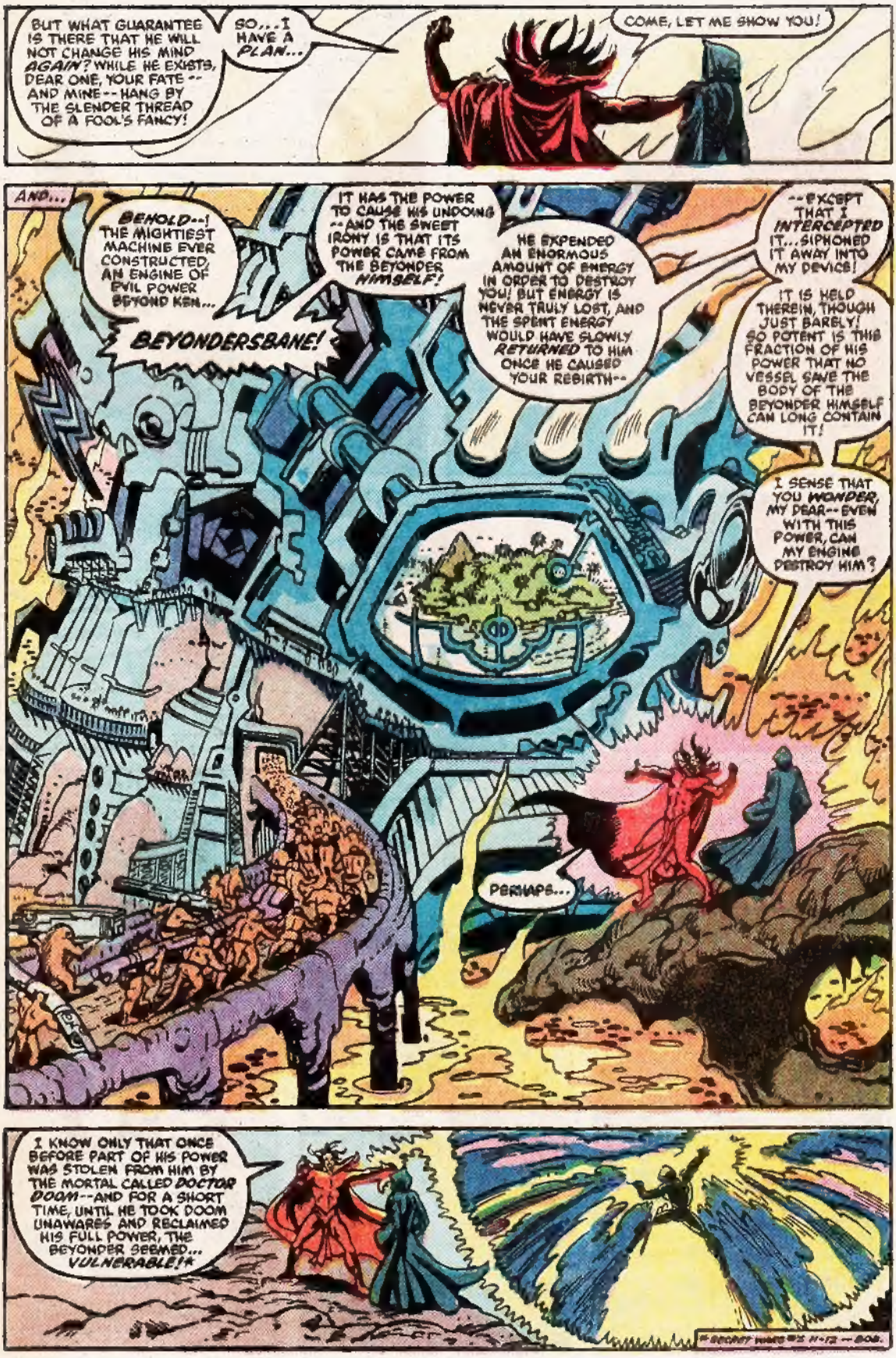

THERE HE SITS, ALL ALONE UPON THAT TINY SOUTH PACIFIC ISLAND, AS HE HAS FOR DAYS NOW...
WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE HE'S THINKING ABOUT, MY LOVE?
PERHAPS HE IS CONTEMPLATING GIVING WINGS TO SWINE, OR TURNING ALL EXISTENCE INSIDE OUT--AND SUCH IS HIS POWER THAT, WITH BUT A WAVE OF HIS HAND, HE COULD MAKE HIS IDLEST IMAGININGS REALITY!

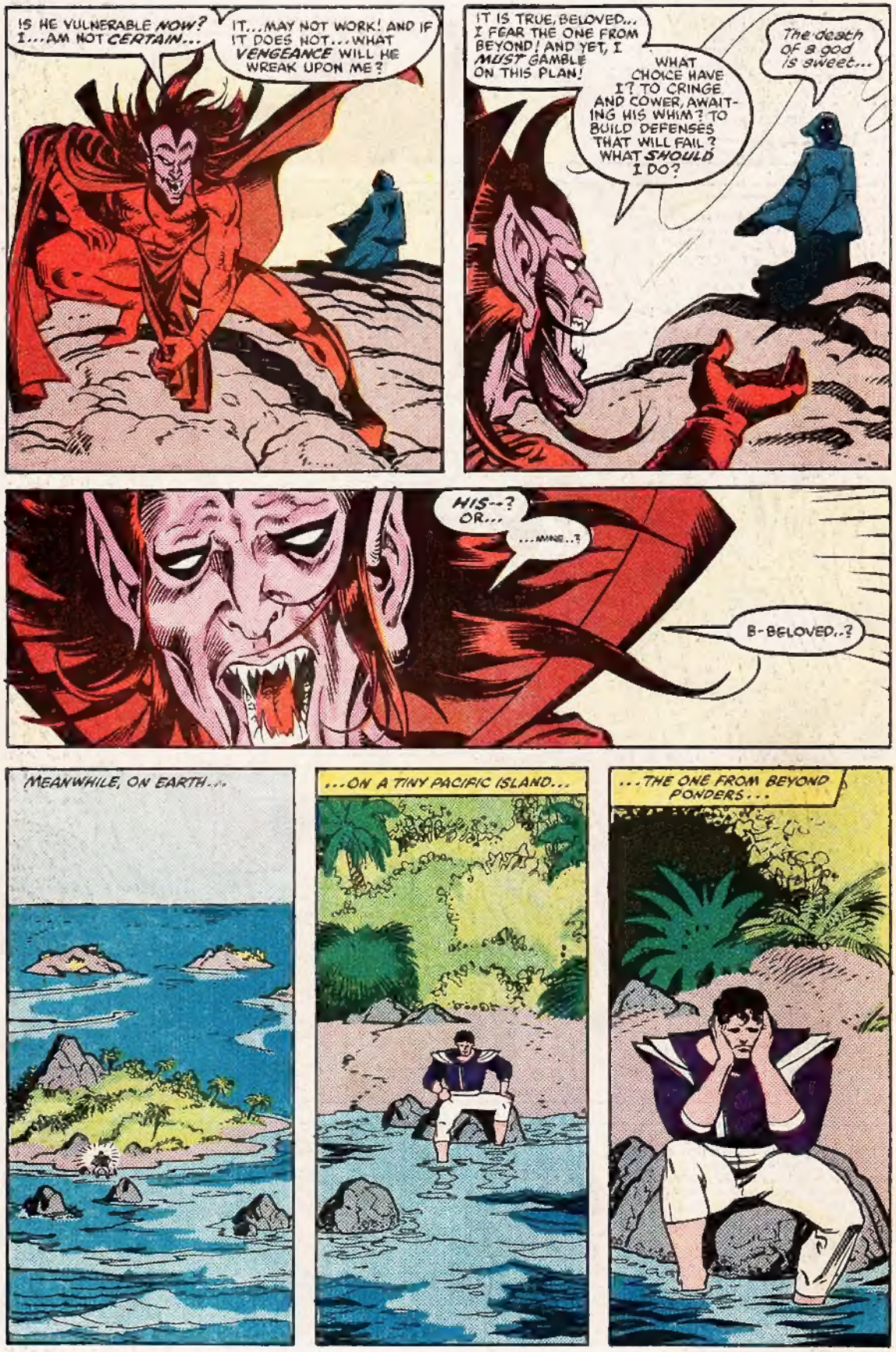
EVEN WE ARE SUBJECT TO HIS WHIM!
AHHR! THE VERY SIGHT OF HIM INFURIATES ME!

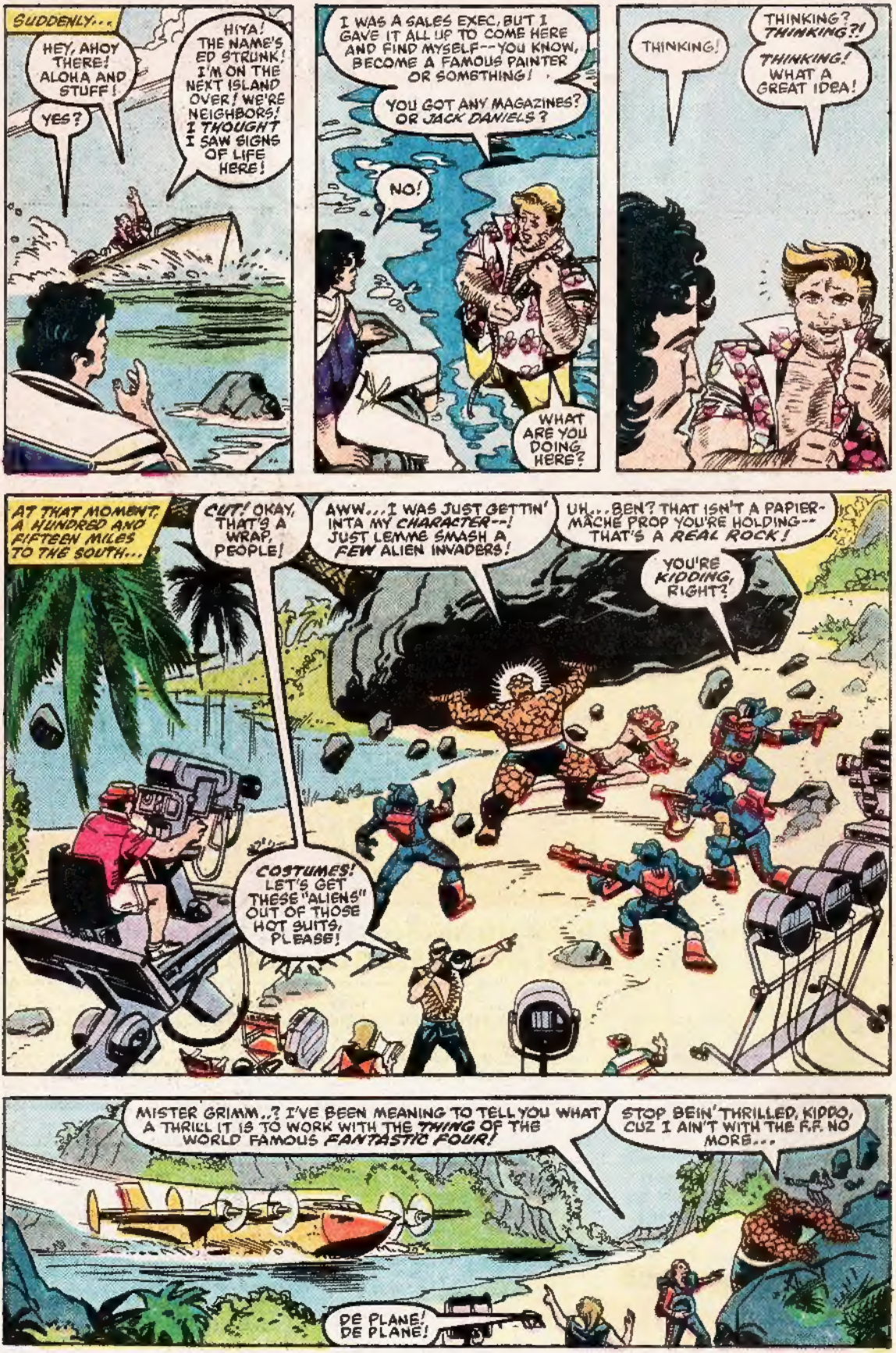

DID YOU HEAR? RAGE WAXES WITHIN THE MASTER'S BREAST!
END THE REPRIEVE! HURL THE WRETCHES BACK INTO THE PIT THAT HE MIGHT DRINK IN THEIR SUFFERING!
LET THE SWEET NECTAR OF THEIR FRESHLY RENEWED AGONY QUENCH HIS FURY--LEST HE VENT IT UPON US!

AH...HOW COMFORTING! I LOVE MY WORK!
I DO NOT ASK MUCH--A STEADY SUPPLY OF SOULS LIBERATED FROM THEIR FLESH-AND-BLOOD HOUSINGS BY YOUR KIND OFFICES, MY DEAR...SOULS CAPTURED BETWEEN THEIR SOJOURN ON THE MORTAL COIL AND THEIR FINAL FATE...SOULS MINE TO TORTURE FOR AN EON OR TWO!

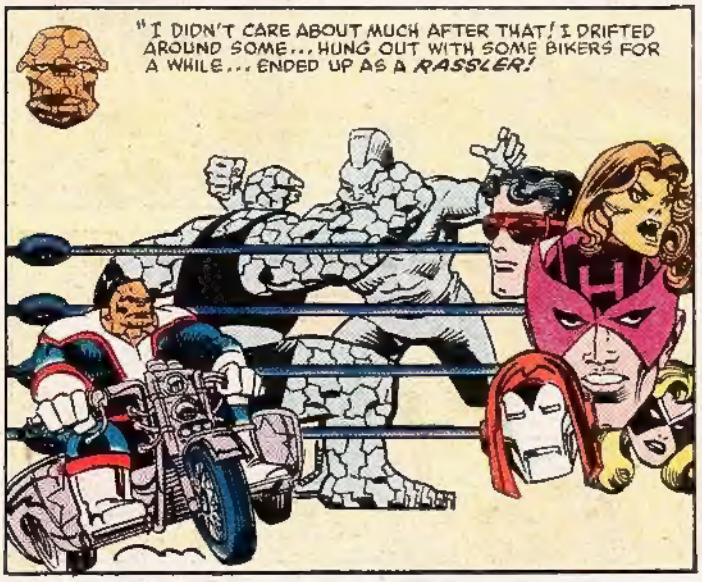
TO THINK THAT THE BEYONDER CUT OFF MY SUPPLY OF SOULS BY ELIMINATING YOU!
HOW RELIEVED I WAS WHEN HE RELENTED AND RESTORED YOU, MY BELOVED DEATH!*
HO!
*LAST ISSUE--BOB.


BUT WHAT GUARANTEE IS THERE THAT HE WILL NOT CHANGE HIS MIND AGAIN? WHILE HE EXISTS, DEAR ONE, YOUR FATE -- AND MINE -- HANG BY THE SLENDER THREAD OF A FOOL'S FANCY!
SO...I HAVE A PLAN...
COME, LET ME SHOW YOU!
AND...
BEHOLD--! THE MIGHTIEST MACHINE EVER CONSTRUCTED, AN ENGINE OF EVIL POWER BEYOND KEN...
BEYONDERSBANE!
IT HAS THE POWER TO CAUSE HIS UNDOING -- AND THE SWEET IRONY IS THAT ITS POWER CAME FROM THE BEYONDER HIMSELF!
HE EXPENDED AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF ENERGY IN ORDER TO DESTROY YOU! BUT ENERGY IS NEVER TRULY LOST, AND THE SPENT ENERGY WOULD HAVE SLOWLY RETURNED TO HIM ONCE HE CAUSED YOUR REBIRTH--
--EXCEPT THAT I INTERCEPTED IT...SIPHONED IT AWAY INTO MY DEVICE!
IT IS HELD THEREIN, THOUGH JUST BARELY! SO POTENT IS THIS FRACTION OF HIS POWER THAT NO VESSEL SAVE THE BODY OF THE BEYONDER HIMSELF CAN LONG CONTAIN IT!
I SENSE THAT YOU WONDER, MY DEAR -- EVEN WITH THIS POWER, CAN MY ENGINE DESTROY HIM?
PERHAPS...
I KNOW ONLY THAT ONCE BEFORE PART OF HIS POWER WAS STOLEN FROM HIM BY THE MORTAL CALLED DOCTOR DOOM -- AND FOR A SHORT TIME, UNTIL HE TOOK DOOM UNAWARES AND RECLAIMED HIS FULL POWER, THE BEYONDER SEEMED... VULNERABLE!*
* SECRET WARS #2 11-12 -- BOB.

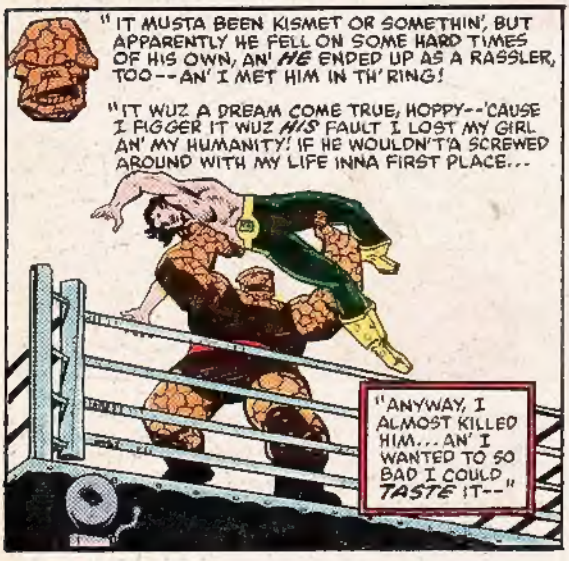

IS HE VULNERABLE NOW? I...AM NOT CERTAIN...
IT...MAY NOT WORK! AND IF IT DOES NOT...WHAT VENGEANCE WILL HE WREAK UPON ME?
IT IS TRUE, BELOVED... I FEAR THE ONE FROM BEYOND! AND YET, I MUST GAMBLE ON THIS PLAN!
WHAT CHOICE HAVE I? TO CRINGE AND COWER, AWAITING HIS WHIM? TO BUILD DEFENSES THAT WILL FAIL? WHAT SHOULD I DO?
The death of a god is sweet...
HIS--? OR...
...MINE..?
B-BELOVED..?
MEANWHILE, ON EARTH...
...ON A TINY PACIFIC ISLAND...
...THE ONE FROM BEYOND PONDERS...


SUDDENLY...
HEY, AHOY THERE! ALOHA AND STUFF!
YES?
HIYA! THE NAME'S ED STRUNK! I'M ON THE NEXT ISLAND OVER! WE'RE NEIGHBORS! I THOUGHT I SAW SIGNS OF LIFE HERE!
I WAS A SALES EXEC, BUT I GAVE IT ALL UP TO COME HERE AND FIND MYSELF--YOU KNOW, BECOME A FAMOUS PAINTER OR SOMETHING!
YOU GOT ANY MAGAZINES? OR JACK DANIELS?
NO!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
THINKING!
THINKING? THINKING?!
THINKING! WHAT A GREAT IDEA!
AT THAT MOMENT, A HUNDRED AND FIFTEEN MILES TO THE SOUTH...
CUT! OKAY, THAT'S A WRAP, PEOPLE!
AWW...I WAS JUST GETTIN' INTA MY CHARACTER--! JUST LEMME SMASH A FEW ALIEN INVADERS!
UH...BEN? THAT ISN'T A PAPIER-MÂCHÉ PROP YOU'RE HOLDING--THAT'S A REAL ROCK!
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?
COSTUMES! LET'S GET THESE "ALIENS" OUT OF THOSE HOT SUITS, PLEASE!
MISTER GRIMM..? I'VE BEEN MEANING TO TELL YOU WHAT A THRILL IT IS TO WORK WITH THE THING OF THE WORLD FAMOUS FANTASTIC FOUR!
STOP BEIN' THRILLED, KIDDO, CUZ I AIN'T WITH THE F.F. NO MORE...
DE PLANE! DE PLANE!

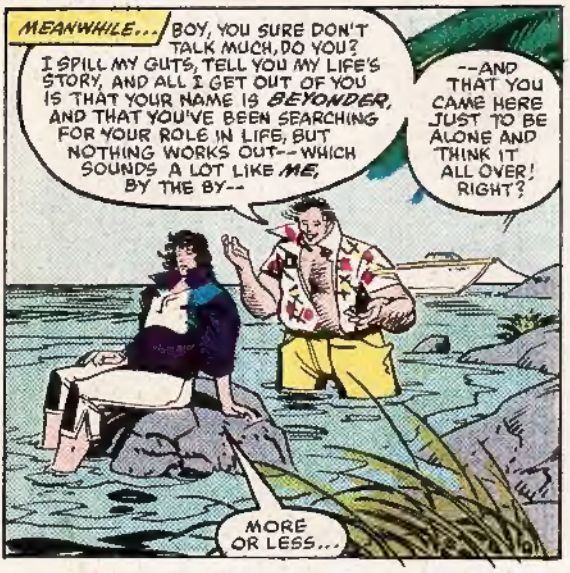
MAIL CALL, EVERYBODY!
WHAT KEPT YA, HERTNEKY?
NEITHER RAIN, NOR SNOW, NOR SLEET, NOR EVEN AFFECTION-STARVED MOO-LA GIRLS CAN STAY OL' "HOPPER" HERTNEKY FROM HIS APPOINTED ROUNDS, ON TIME--
--BUT FINDING THAT DARN BEER YOU ASKED FOR--!
SOON...
C'MON, HOPPER, ADMIT IT, ONE OLD PILOT TO ANOTHER--THIS STUFF'S PURE AMBROSIA--! BEER OF THE GODS!
IT'S NOT BAD! WHERE'D YOU COME ACROSS THIS BRAND?
IN PITTSBURGH! I PASSED THROUGH THERE ONCE WHEN I WAS ON THE RASSLIN' CIRCUIT...
ISN'T THAT WHERE YOU WRESTLED THAT BEYONDER FELLOW?
HEY--!
DON'T MENTION THAT NAME AROUND ME--! EVER!
WHY? I THOUGHT YOU WHIPPED HIM?
I DID! BUT I WANTED TO KILL HIM!
A GENTLE SOUL LIKE YOU? THAT'S HARD TO BELIEVE!
AWRIGHT, HOPPER...I'LL TELL YOU THE STORY--AN' THEN YOU TELL ME IF I WUZN'T JUSTIFIED!
"A WHILE AGO, ME AN' A BUNCH OF OTHER SUPER-TYPES--INCLUDIN' A PASSEL OF NOGOODNIKS--WUZ ABDUCTED TO ANOTHER PLANET BY--NO KIDDIN'--THE BEYONDER!
"HE WANTED TO WATCH US FIGHT! GUESS HIS TV WUZ BROKEN...
"SO WE FOUGHT...
"NOBODY REALLY WON! IN THE END, THE BEYONDER VANISHED, THE BAD GUYS GOT AWAY, AND SINCE THERE WUZN'T NOTHIN' ELSE TO DO, ALL THE GOOD GUYS WENT HOME--
"'CEPT ME! SEE, FOR SOME REASON, ON THAT ALIEN PLANET I COULD CHANGE BACK INTO MY OLD HUMAN SELF AT WILL--AN' I JUST COULDN'T FACE COMIN' BACK HERE SO QUICK WHERE I'M ALWAYS A MONSTER!*
WOULDN'TCHA KNOW IT, BEFORE LONG I GOT MYSELF IN TROUBLE THERE, AN' MANAGED TO LOSE MY HUMAN HALF ALTOGETHER!
* SECRET WARS #5 1-12--80s.
"THERE WUZN'T MUCH POINT IN STICKIN' AROUND THEN, SO'S I CAME HOME!
"THAT'S WHEN I FOUND OUT THAT MY EX-BEST FRIEND HAD STOLEN MY GIRL, ALICIA, FROM ME WHILE I WUZ GONE!


"I DIDN'T CARE ABOUT MUCH AFTER THAT! I DRIFTED AROUND SOME... HUNG OUT WITH SOME BIKERS FOR A WHILE... ENDED UP AS A *RASSLER!*

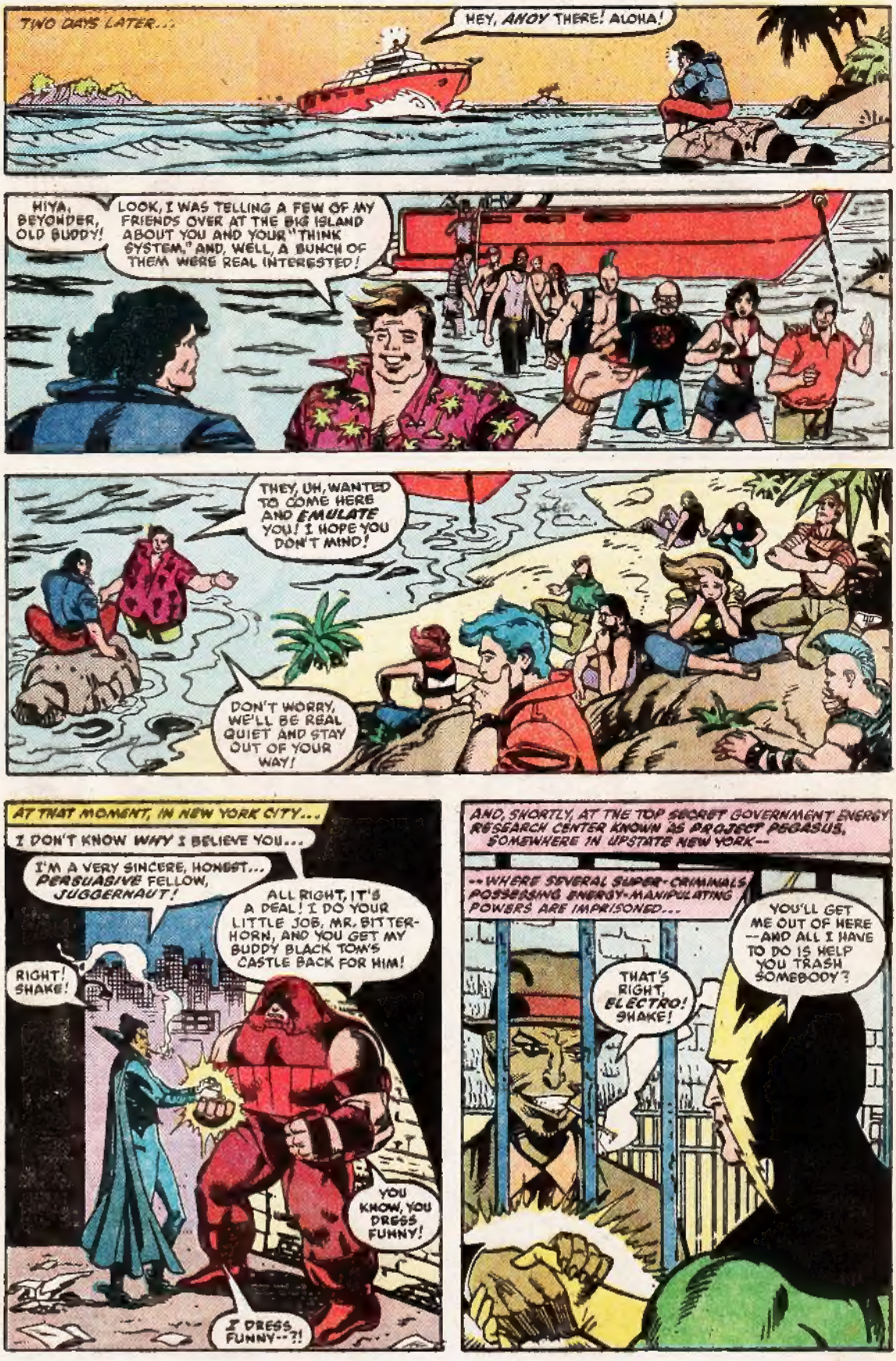
"WHILE I WAS LIVIN' A SORDID EXISTENCE AN VENTIN' MY HOSTILITIES IN TH' RING, SEEMS TH' *BEYONDER* CAME TO EARTH!
"I GUESS HE WAS TIRED O' JUST WATCHIN' FROM AFAR AN' WANTED TO CHECK US OUT FIRST HAND, AS *ONE* OF US!

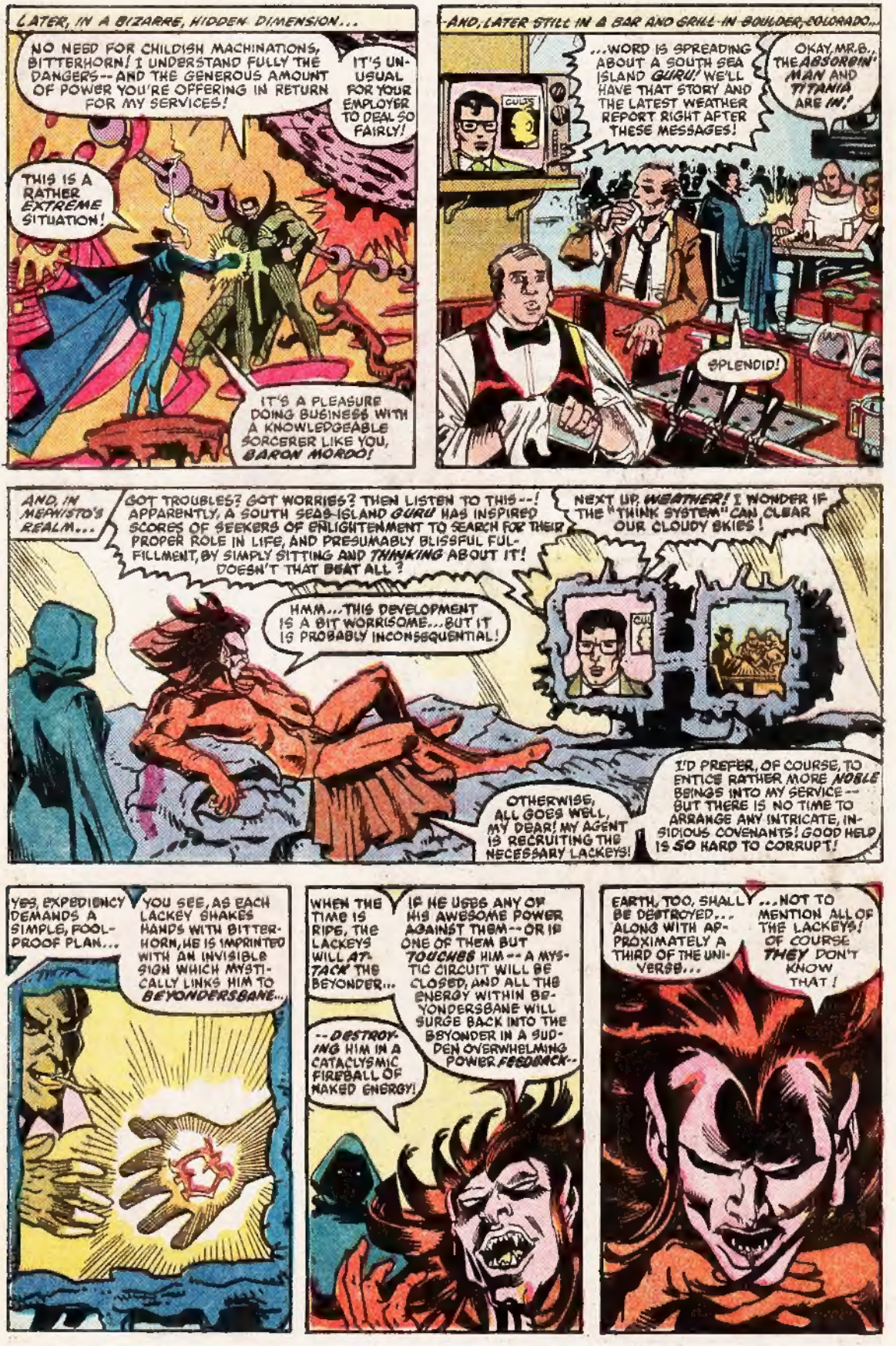

"IT MUSTA BEEN KISMET OR SOMETHIN', BUT APPARENTLY HE FELL ON SOME HARD TIMES OF HIS OWN, AN' *HE* ENDED UP AS A RASSLER, TOO--AN' I MET HIM IN TH' RING!
"IT WUZ A DREAM COME TRUE, HOPPY--'CAUSE I FIGGER IT WUZ *HIS* FAULT I LOST MY GIRL AN' MY HUMANITY! IF HE WOULDN'T'A SCREWED AROUND WITH MY LIFE INNA FIRST PLACE...
"ANYWAY, I ALMOST KILLED HIM... AN' I WANTED TO SO BAD I COULD *TASTE* IT--"

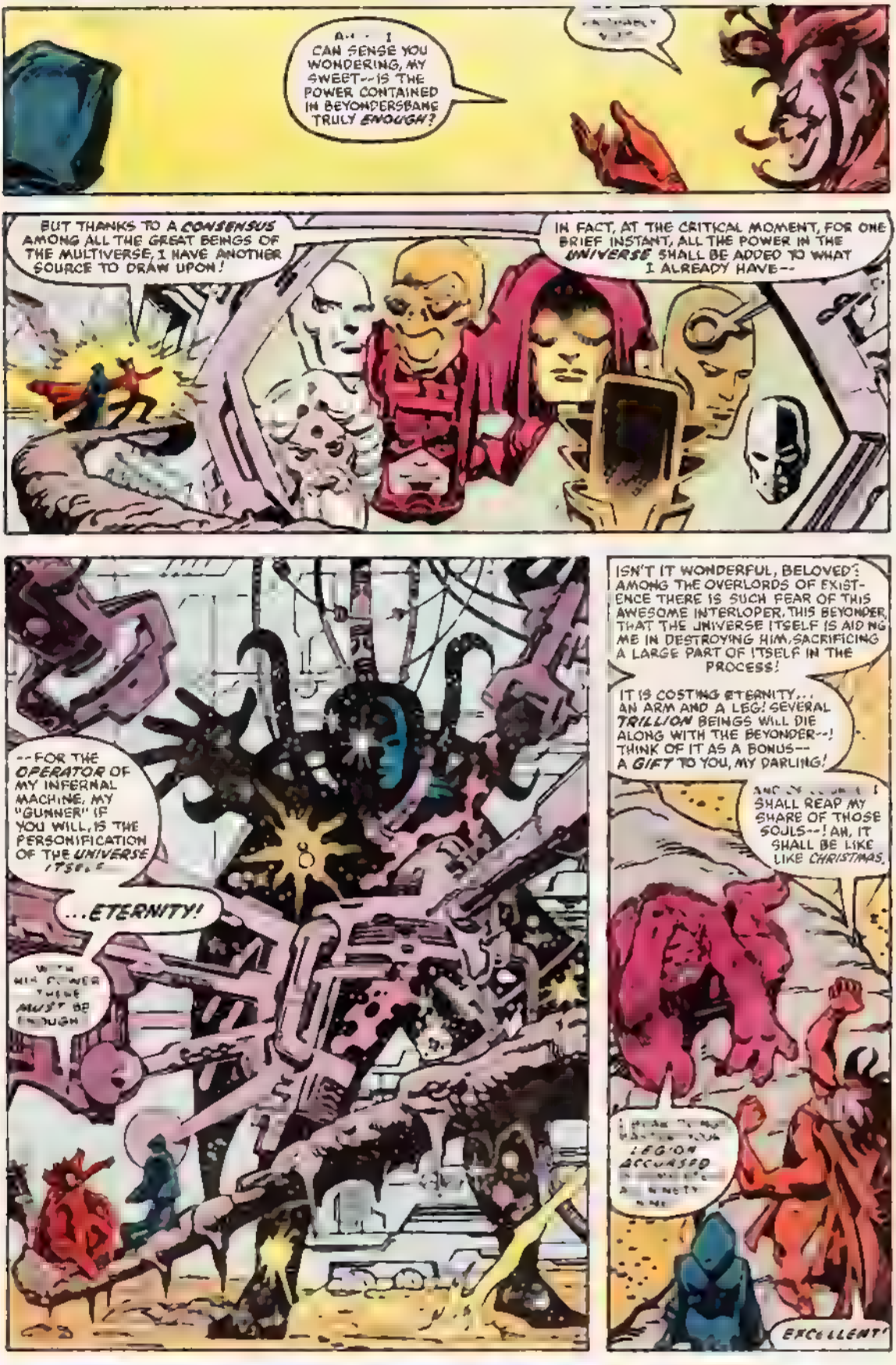
AT THE LAST MINUTE, THOUGH, I WIMPED OUT! I COULDN'T DO IT... *THEN...**
BUT, HOPPY, I STILL *WANT* TO! I--I WAKE UP INNA MIDDLE OF TH' NIGHT THINKIN' ABOUT IT!
I GUESS THAT MAKES ME AN "UN-REQUITED MURDERER"! HECK, I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* I AM ANYMORE!
WHEW! SOME STORY, BEN!
* SEE RECENT ISSUES OF *THE THING*-- BOB.

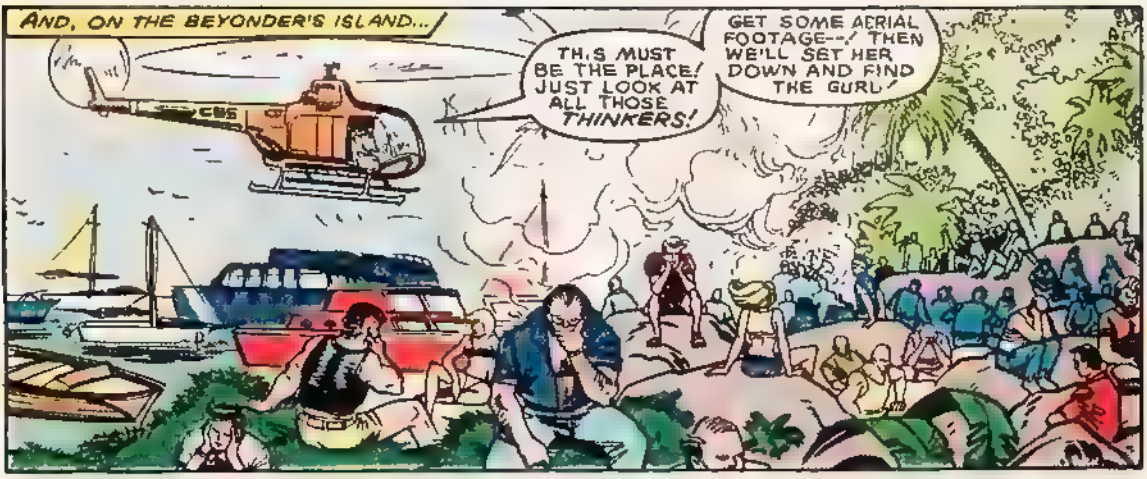

MEANWHILE... BOY, YOU SURE DON'T TALK MUCH, DO YOU? I SPILL MY GUTS, TELL YOU MY LIFE'S STORY, AND ALL I GET OUT OF YOU IS THAT YOUR NAME IS *BEYONDER*, AND THAT YOU'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR YOUR ROLE IN LIFE, BUT NOTHING WORKS OUT--WHICH SOUNDS A LOT LIKE *ME*, BY THE BY--
--AND THAT YOU CAME HERE JUST TO BE ALONE AND THINK IT ALL OVER! RIGHT?
MORE OR LESS...

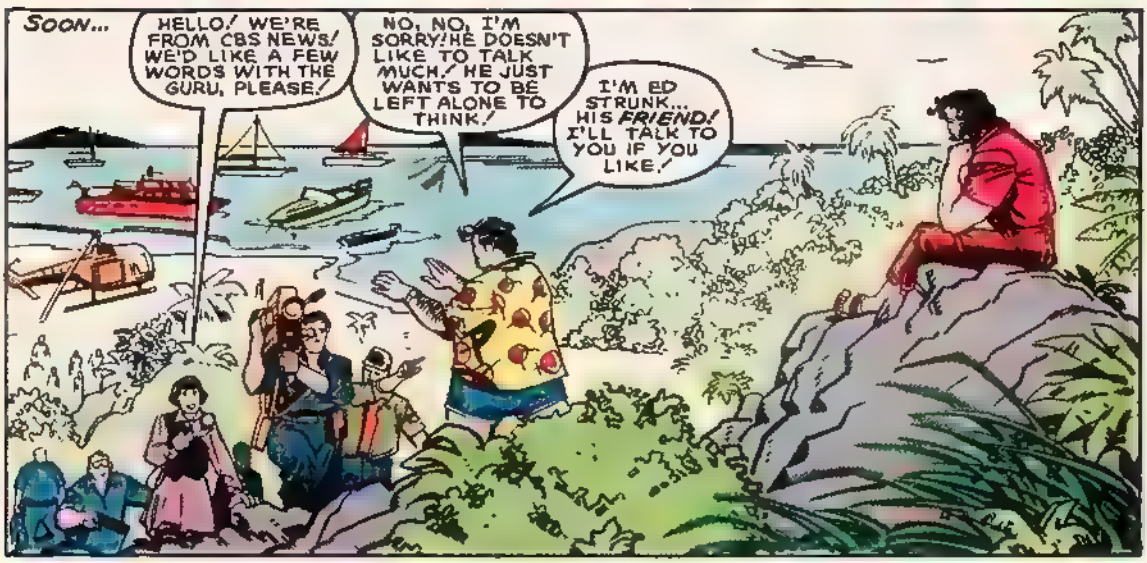
WELL, PAL, I THINK YOU'RE *ON* TO SOMETHING HERE WITH THIS SITTING AND THINKING APPROACH! YOU'VE REALLY BEEN AN INSPIRATION TO ME!
SEE YOU LATER, OKAY?


TWO DAYS LATER...
HEY, AHOY THERE! ALOHA!
HIYA, BEYONDER, OLD BUDDY!
LOOK, I WAS TELLING A FEW OF MY FRIENDS OVER AT THE BIG ISLAND ABOUT YOU AND YOUR "THINK SYSTEM," AND, WELL, A BUNCH OF THEM WERE REAL INTERESTED!
THEY, UH, WANTED TO COME HERE AND EMULATE YOU! I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND!
DON'T WORRY, WE'LL BE REAL QUIET AND STAY OUT OF YOUR WAY!
AT THAT MOMENT, IN NEW YORK CITY...
I DON'T KNOW WHY I BELIEVE YOU...
I'M A VERY SINCERE, HONEST... PERSUASIVE FELLOW, JUGGERNAUT!
ALL RIGHT, IT'S A DEAL! I DO YOUR LITTLE JOB, MR. BITTERHORN, AND YOU GET MY BUDDY BLACK TOM'S CASTLE BACK FOR HIM!
RIGHT! SHAKE!
YOU KNOW, YOU DRESS FUNNY!
I DRESS FUNNY--?!
AND, SHORTLY, AT THE TOP SECRET GOVERNMENT ENERGY RESEARCH CENTER KNOWN AS PROJECT PEGASUS, SOMEWHERE IN UPSTATE NEW YORK--
--WHERE SEVERAL SUPER-CRIMINALS POSSESSING ENERGY-MANIPULATING POWERS ARE IMPRISONED...
THAT'S RIGHT, ELECTRO! SHAKE!
YOU'LL GET ME OUT OF HERE --AND ALL I HAVE TO DO IS HELP YOU TRASH SOMEBODY?

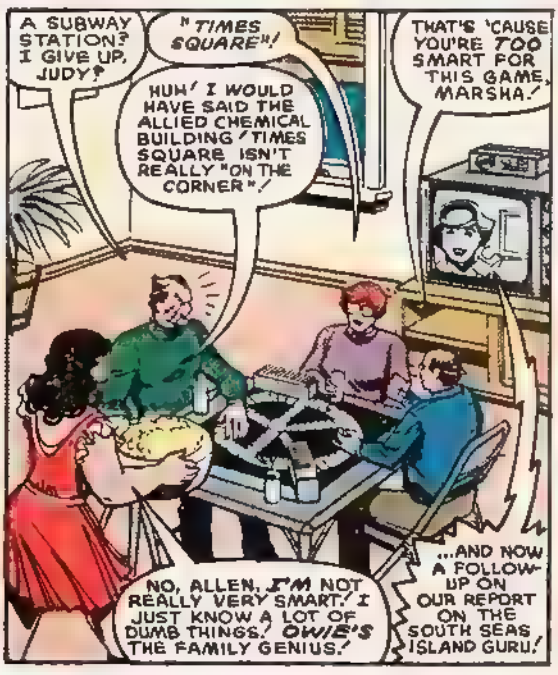

LATER, IN A BIZARRE, HIDDEN DIMENSION...
NO NEED FOR CHILDISH MACHINATIONS, BITTERHORN! I UNDERSTAND FULLY THE DANGERS--AND THE GENEROUS AMOUNT OF POWER YOU'RE OFFERING IN RETURN FOR MY SERVICES!
IT'S UNUSUAL FOR YOUR EMPLOYER TO DEAL SO FAIRLY!
THIS IS A RATHER EXTREME SITUATION!
IT'S A PLEASURE DOING BUSINESS WITH A KNOWLEDGEABLE SORCERER LIKE YOU, BARON MORDO!
AND, LATER STILL IN A BAR AND GRILL IN BOULDER, COLORADO...
...WORD IS SPREADING ABOUT A SOUTH SEA ISLAND GURU! WE'LL HAVE THAT STORY AND THE LATEST WEATHER REPORT RIGHT AFTER THESE MESSAGES!
OKAY, MR. B., THE ABSORBIN' MAN AND TITANIA ARE IN!
SPLENDID!
AND, IN MEPHISTO'S REALM...
GOT TROUBLES? GOT WORRIES? THEN LISTEN TO THIS--! APPARENTLY, A SOUTH SEAS ISLAND GURU HAS INSPIRED SCORES OF SEEKERS OF ENLIGHTENMENT TO SEARCH FOR THEIR PROPER ROLE IN LIFE, AND PRESUMABLY BLISSFUL FULFILLMENT, BY SIMPLY SITTING AND THINKING ABOUT IT! DOESN'T THAT BEAT ALL ?
NEXT UP, WEATHER! I WONDER IF THE "THINK SYSTEM" CAN CLEAR OUR CLOUDY SKIES !
HMM...THIS DEVELOPMENT IS A BIT WORRISOME...BUT IT IS PROBABLY INCONSEQUENTIAL!
OTHERWISE, ALL GOES WELL, MY DEAR! MY AGENT IS RECRUITING THE NECESSARY LACKEYS!
I'D PREFER, OF COURSE, TO ENTICE RATHER MORE NOBLE BEINGS INTO MY SERVICE -- BUT THERE IS NO TIME TO ARRANGE ANY INTRICATE, INSIDIOUS COVENANTS! GOOD HELP IS SO HARD TO CORRUPT!
YES, EXPEDIENCY DEMANDS A SIMPLE, FOOLPROOF PLAN...
YOU SEE, AS EACH LACKEY SHAKES HANDS WITH BITTERHORN, HE IS IMPRINTED WITH AN INVISIBLE SIGN WHICH MYSTICALLY LINKS HIM TO BEYONDERSBANE...
WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE, THE LACKEYS WILL ATTACK THE BEYONDER...
IF HE USES ANY OF HIS AWESOME POWER AGAINST THEM--OR IF ONE OF THEM BUT TOUCHES HIM -- A MYSTIC CIRCUIT WILL BE CLOSED, AND ALL THE ENERGY WITHIN BEYONDERSBANE WILL SURGE BACK INTO THE BEYONDER IN A SUDDEN OVERWHELMING POWER FEEDBACK--
--DESTROYING HIM IN A CATACLYSMIC FIREBALL OF NAKED ENERGY!
EARTH, TOO, SHALL BE DESTROYED... ALONG WITH APPROXIMATELY A THIRD OF THE UNIVERSE...
...NOT TO MENTION ALL OF THE LACKEYS! OF COURSE THEY DON'T KNOW THAT!

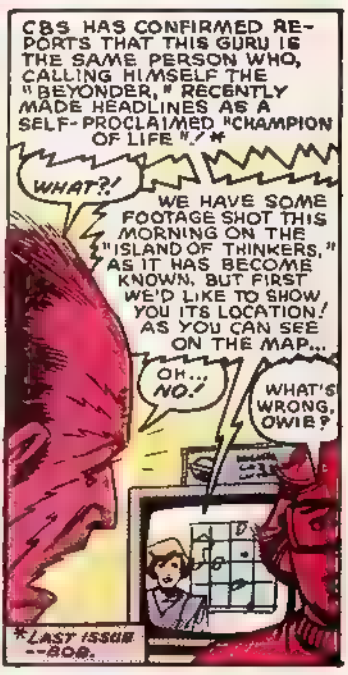

AH - I CAN SENSE YOU WONDERING, MY SWEET--IS THE POWER CONTAINED IN BEYONDERSBANE TRULY ENOUGH?
BUT THANKS TO A CONSENSUS AMONG ALL THE GREAT BEINGS OF THE MULTIVERSE, I HAVE ANOTHER SOURCE TO DRAW UPON!
IN FACT, AT THE CRITICAL MOMENT, FOR ONE BRIEF INSTANT, ALL THE POWER IN THE UNIVERSE SHALL BE ADDED TO WHAT I ALREADY HAVE--
--FOR THE OPERATOR OF MY INFERNAL MACHINE, MY "GUNNER" IF YOU WILL, IS THE PERSONIFICATION OF THE UNIVERSE ITSELF!
...ETERNITY!
WITH HIS POWER THERE MUST BE ENOUGH
ISN'T IT WONDERFUL, BELOVED? AMONG THE OVERLORDS OF EXISTENCE THERE IS SUCH FEAR OF THIS AWESOME INTERLOPER, THIS BEYONDER, THAT THE UNIVERSE ITSELF IS AIDING ME IN DESTROYING HIM, SACRIFICING A LARGE PART OF ITSELF IN THE PROCESS!
IT IS COSTING ETERNITY... AN ARM AND A LEG! SEVERAL TRILLION BEINGS WILL DIE ALONG WITH THE BEYONDER--! THINK OF IT AS A BONUS-- A GIFT TO YOU, MY DARLING!
AND I SHALL REAP MY SHARE OF THOSE SOULS--! AH, IT SHALL BE LIKE LIKE CHRISTMAS.
LEGION ACCURSED
EXCELLENT!


AND, ON THE BEYONDER'S ISLAND...
CBS
THIS MUST BE THE PLACE! JUST LOOK AT ALL THOSE THINKERS!
GET SOME AERIAL FOOTAGE--! THEN WE'LL SET HER DOWN AND FIND THE GURU!


SOON...
HELLO! WE'RE FROM CBS NEWS! WE'D LIKE A FEW WORDS WITH THE GURU, PLEASE!
NO, NO, I'M SORRY! HE DOESN'T LIKE TO TALK MUCH! HE JUST WANTS TO BE LEFT ALONE TO THINK!
I'M ED STRUNK... HIS FRIEND! I'LL TALK TO YOU IF YOU LIKE!

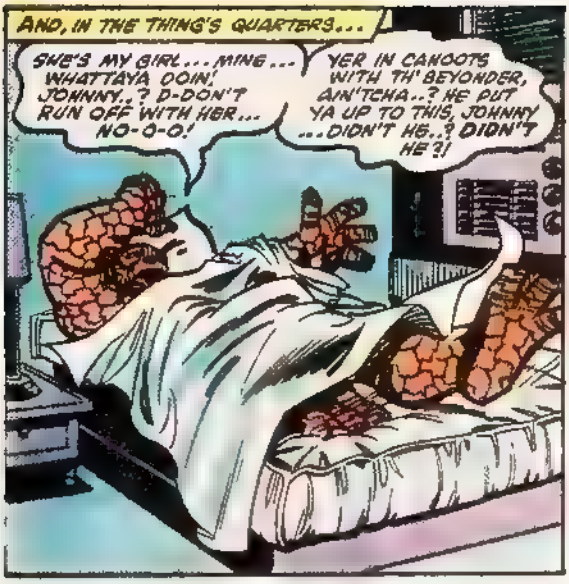
THAT EVENING, IN THE SUBURBAN DENVER, COLORADO APARTMENT OF OWEN REECE AND MARSHA ROSENBERG...
"WHAT IS ON THE CORNER OF FORTY-SECOND STREET AND BROADWAY IN NEW YORK CITY?"
UMM... PICK-POCKETS?
NO-O! COME ON, OWIE!

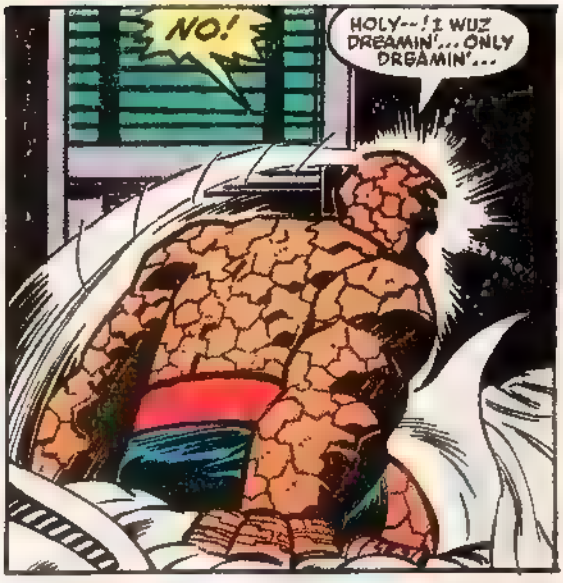

A SUBWAY STATION? I GIVE UP, JUDY?
"TIMES SQUARE"!
HUH! I WOULD HAVE SAID THE ALLIED CHEMICAL BUILDING! TIMES SQUARE ISN'T REALLY "ON THE CORNER"!
THAT'S 'CAUSE YOU'RE TOO SMART FOR THIS GAME, MARSHA!
NO, ALLEN, I'M NOT REALLY VERY SMART! I JUST KNOW A LOT OF DUMB THINGS! OWIE'S THE FAMILY GENIUS!
...AND NOW A FOLLOW-UP ON OUR REPORT ON THE SOUTH SEAS ISLAND GURU!


CBS HAS CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT THIS GURU IS THE SAME PERSON WHO, CALLING HIMSELF THE "BEYONDER," RECENTLY MADE HEADLINES AS A SELF-PROCLAIMED "CHAMPION OF LIFE"! *
WHAT?!
WE HAVE SOME FOOTAGE SHOT THIS MORNING ON THE "ISLAND OF THINKERS," AS IT HAS BECOME KNOWN. BUT FIRST WE'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU ITS LOCATION! AS YOU CAN SEE ON THE MAP...
OH... NO!
WHAT'S WRONG, OWIE?
*LAST ISSUE --BOB.

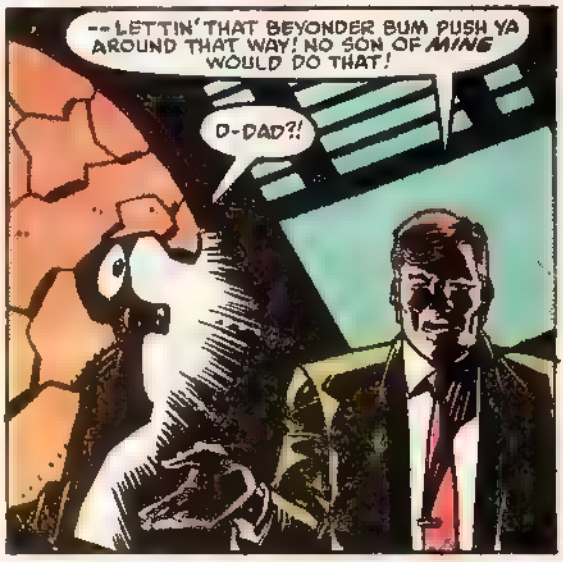
I-- I'VE GOT TO BE ALONE! I MEAN...EXCUSE ME!
OWIE..?
OWIE, CAN I COME IN?
GOOD GRIEF! OWIE, WHAT ON EARTH--?
I JUST HAD TO CHECK SOMETHING!
AL AND JUDY DON'T KNOW I'M THE MOLECULE MAN! THEY JUST THINK I'M A REGULAR GUY WHOSE FACE GOT MESSED UP IN AN ACCIDENT--AND I'D LIKE TO KEEP IT THAT WAY. SO I CAME IN HERE TO PROBE THE UNIVERSE!
JUST AS I SUSPECTED...THE MAJOR POWERS OF THE MULTIVERSE --EXCEPT ME, THAT IS--ARE CONSPIRING AGAINST THE BEYONDER!
I CAN'T QUITE TELL WHAT THEIR PLAN IS! THEY'RE BEING VERY CLEVER-- THE BEYONDER'LL NEVER NOTICE TILL IT'S TOO LATE!
NOW WHAT DO I DO? HALF OF ME WANTS TO WARN THE BEYONDER... THE OTHER HALF HOPES THEY SUCCEED!
I-- I'M SCARED OF HIM, TOO, MARSHA! B-BUT-- OH, WHAT'LL I DO?
WE--WE'VE GOT COMPANY, OWIE! IT'S NOT POLITE TO LEAVE THEM ALL ALONE! COME ON...LET'S REJOIN THE GAME!
MEANWHILE, IN THE WESTCHESTER, NEW YORK MANSION WHICH IS HOME AND HEADQUARTERS FOR THE X-MEN AND THE NEW MUTANTS...
WE KNOW HE'S TROUBLE-- AND NOW THAT WE KNOW WHERE HE IS, LET'S GO AFTER HIM!
HE IS DOING LITERALLY NOTHING, RACHEL! WE SHALL LEAVE HIM ALONE!
SELF AGREES WITH MAGNETO! OBSERVE HIS INACTION!
AND IN THE MANHATTAN APARTMENT OF PETER PARKER A.K.A. SPIDER-MAN...
MAYBE I SHOULD TRY THE "THINK SYSTEM"! NOTHING ELSE I DO EVER WORKS!

AND, ONE HUNDRED FIFTEEN MILES FROM "THINKERS' ISLAND"...
HMM?! THAT WEIRDO "THINK SYSTEM" GOO-ROO IS HMM?!!
OF ALL THE--! WHY DID IT HAFTA BE HIM... HERE IN TH' GODFORSAKEN SOUTH PACIFIC OF ALL PLACES, RIGHT UNDER MY NOSE!
RRAKK!
SOMETIME LATER, IN A CAVERN FAR BENEATH "THINKERS' ISLAND"...
THE SANDS OF THE HOUR-GLASS RUN LOW, MY LOVE! IF THE BEYONDERSBANE DEVICE IS NOT USED SOON, MELTDOWN IS ALMOST CERTAIN!
BUT MY LEGION ACCURSED IS MASSED AND MYSTICALLY HELD IN STASIS AT THE PEAK OF READINESS HERE IN THIS STASING AREA! IN MERE MOMENTS, ETERNITY WILL HAVE COMPLETED THE FOCUSING OF HIS OWN AWESOME POWER. AND WE SHALL STRIKE!
AND NOW, I WONDER, IS OUR TARGET FARING? LET US SEE...
UH, BEYONDER, EVER SINCE THAT NETWORK NEWS-CAST AIRED, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ARRIVING BY THE HUNDREDS EVERY HOUR!
THAT'S TOO BAD! I SUPPOSE I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE!
LEAVE? NO! NO!
BUT... WITHOUT YOU, WE'RE LOST!
ED, ALL I WANTED WAS TO THINK! I'VE BEEN AVOIDING USING ENERGY FOR ANYTHING ELSE, AND I HATE HAVING TO WASTE SOME MOVING-- BUT IT'S GETTING CROWDED!
NO! HE CANNOT DO THIS!
IF HE MOVES NOW, WE WILL HAVE TO RECALIBRATE EVERYTHING! THERE WILL NOT BE TIME! THE DEVICE WILL MELT DOWN BEFORE WE ARE FINISHED!
I MUST KEEP HIM THERE!
A DIVERSION--! I SHALL CREATE A DIVERSION TO DELAY HIM!


AND, IN THE THING'S QUARTERS...
SHE'S MY GIRL... MINE... WHATTAYA DOIN' JOHNNY..? D-DON'T RUN OFF WITH HER... NO-O-O!
YER IN CAHOOTS WITH TH' BEYONDER, AIN'TCHA..? HE PUT YA UP TO THIS, JOHNNY ...DIDN'T HE..? DIDN'T HE?!


NO!
HOLY--! I WUZ DREAMIN'... ONLY DREAMIN'...

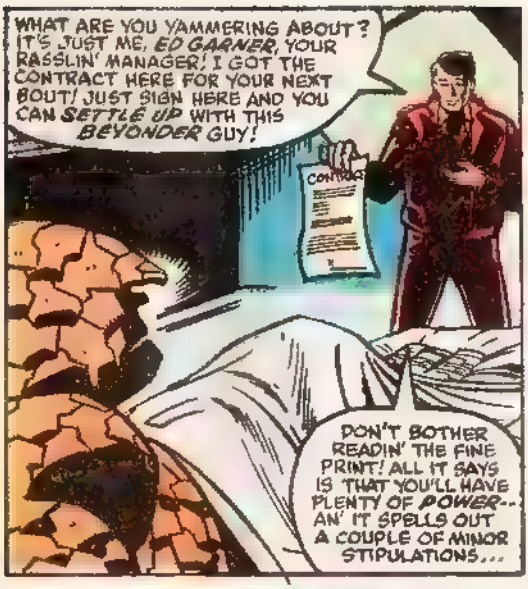
A-AN' MAYBE I STILL AM! WHO-- WHO ARE YOU?
YOU KNOW WHO I AM! BUT I AIN'T SURE WHO YOU ARE--

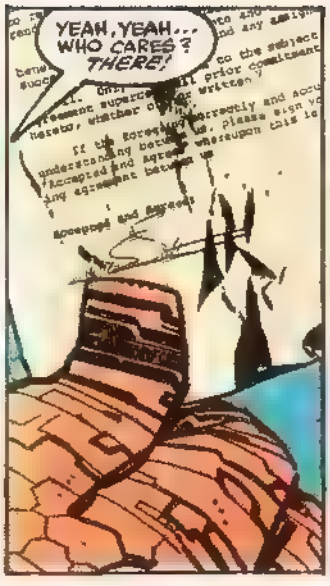

--LETTIN' THAT BEYONDER BUM PUSH YA AROUND THAT WAY! NO SON OF MINE WOULD DO THAT!
D-DAD?!

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH GET GOING! SOONER OR LATER THE MAN WHO DOES IS THE MAN WHO THINKS HE CAN! WHEN YOU CARRY THAT BALL YOU KEEP TELLING YOURSELF, "I WILL NOT BE DENIED!"
COACH STRECZLETSKI?

I--I NEVER THOUGHT THAT YOU WOULD BE A COWARD!
GEEZ, IT'S YOU, SOOZIE! I COULD'A SWORN--! BUT, HEY--! I AIN'T NO COWARD! YOU KNOW THAT, DON TCHA? I PROVED MYSELF WHEN I WUZ IN THE F.F. WITH YA, DIDN'T I?

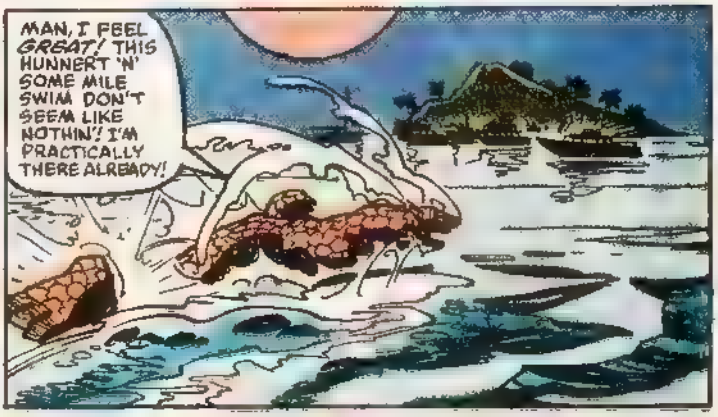
BEN, IF YOU'RE REALLY BRAVE, IF YOU REALLY LOVE ME, HOW COULD YOU LET THE BEYONDER FORCE ME TO BETRAY YOU? HE MADE ME LOVE JOHNNY! WHY DON'T YOU DO SOMETHING TO FREE ME FROM THIS NIGHTMARE?!
ALICIA! ALICIA, HONEY--!


WHAT ARE YOU YAMMERING ABOUT? IT'S JUST ME, ED GARNER, YOUR RASSLIN' MANAGER! I GOT THE CONTRACT HERE FOR YOUR NEXT BOUT! JUST SIGN HERE AND YOU CAN SETTLE UP WITH THIS BEYONDER GUY!
CONTRACT
DON'T BOTHER READIN' THE FINE PRINT! ALL IT SAYS IS THAT YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY OF POWER-- AN' IT SPELLS OUT A COUPLE OF MINOR STIPULATIONS...


YEAH, YEAH... WHO CARES? THERE!

I AIN'T WAITIN' FOR THE MATCH THOUGH! I KNOW WHERE HE IS--

--AN' I'M GONNA GO OVER THERE AN' KICK HIS BUTT RIGHT NOW!

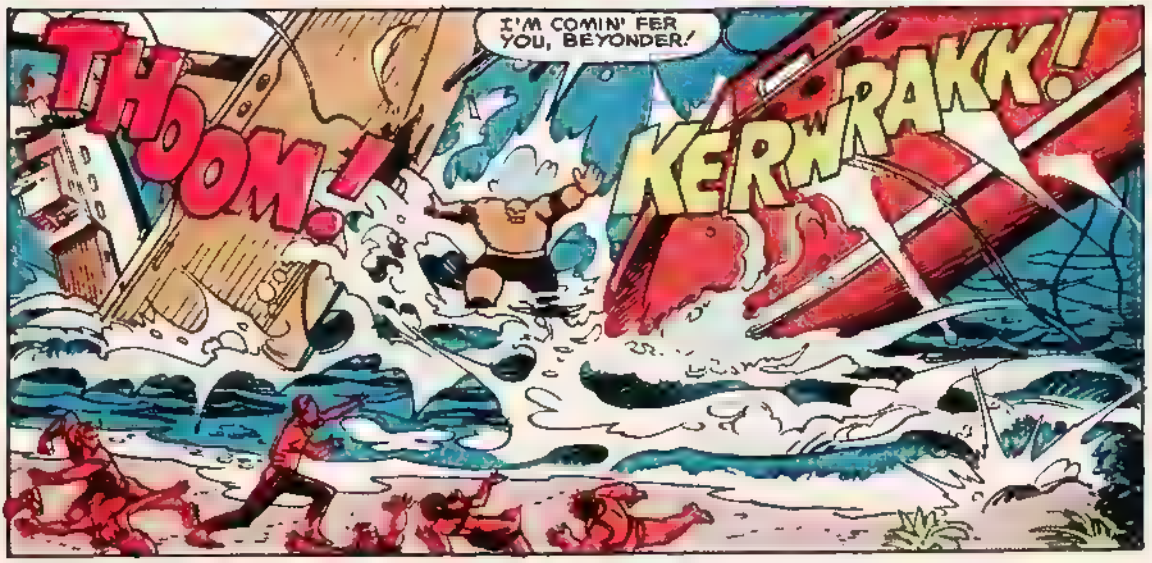

MAN, I FEEL GREAT! THIS HUNNERT 'N' SOME MILE SWIM DON'T SEEM LIKE NOTHIN'! I'M PRACTICALLY THERE ALREADY!

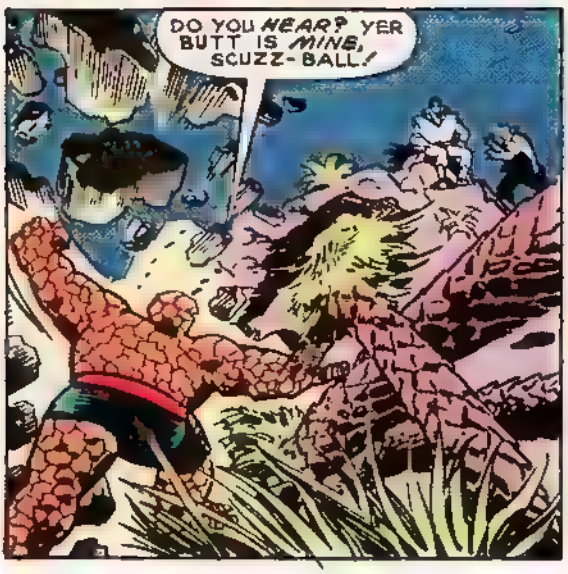
MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE THING'S ROOM...
IT IS DONE! THE BRUTISH THING, WITH HIS POWER INCREASED A HUNDREDFOLD BY THE TERMS OF THIS COVENANT, SHOULD MANAGE TO DISTRACT THE BEYONDER FOR A FEW MOMENTS, DELAYING HIS DEPARTURE JUST LONG ENOUGH!

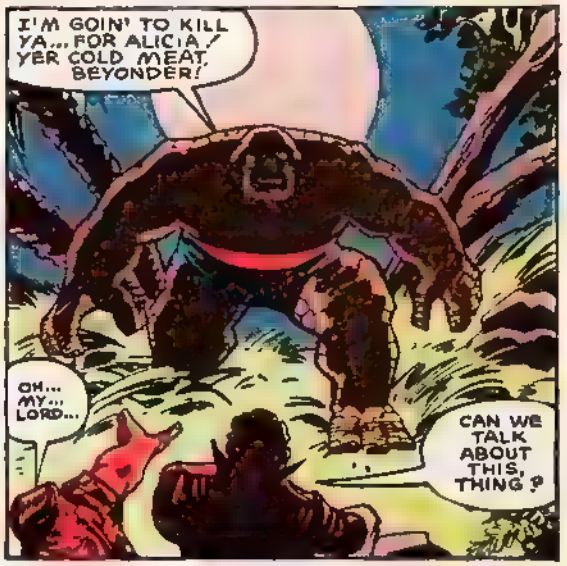
HOW EASILY HE WAS DUPED!
THUS, HE WILL SERVE MEPHISTO, AND FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF DOING SO --HIS SOUL SHALL BE FORFEIT! HAH!

AT THAT MOMENT..
PLEASE, BEYONDER--/ I'LL TRY TO KEEP EVERYONE OUT OF YOUR HAIR./ HONEST!
I'M SORRY, ED...

KRAKOOM!
HEY! WHAT WAS THAT?
IT CAME FROM THE COVE!

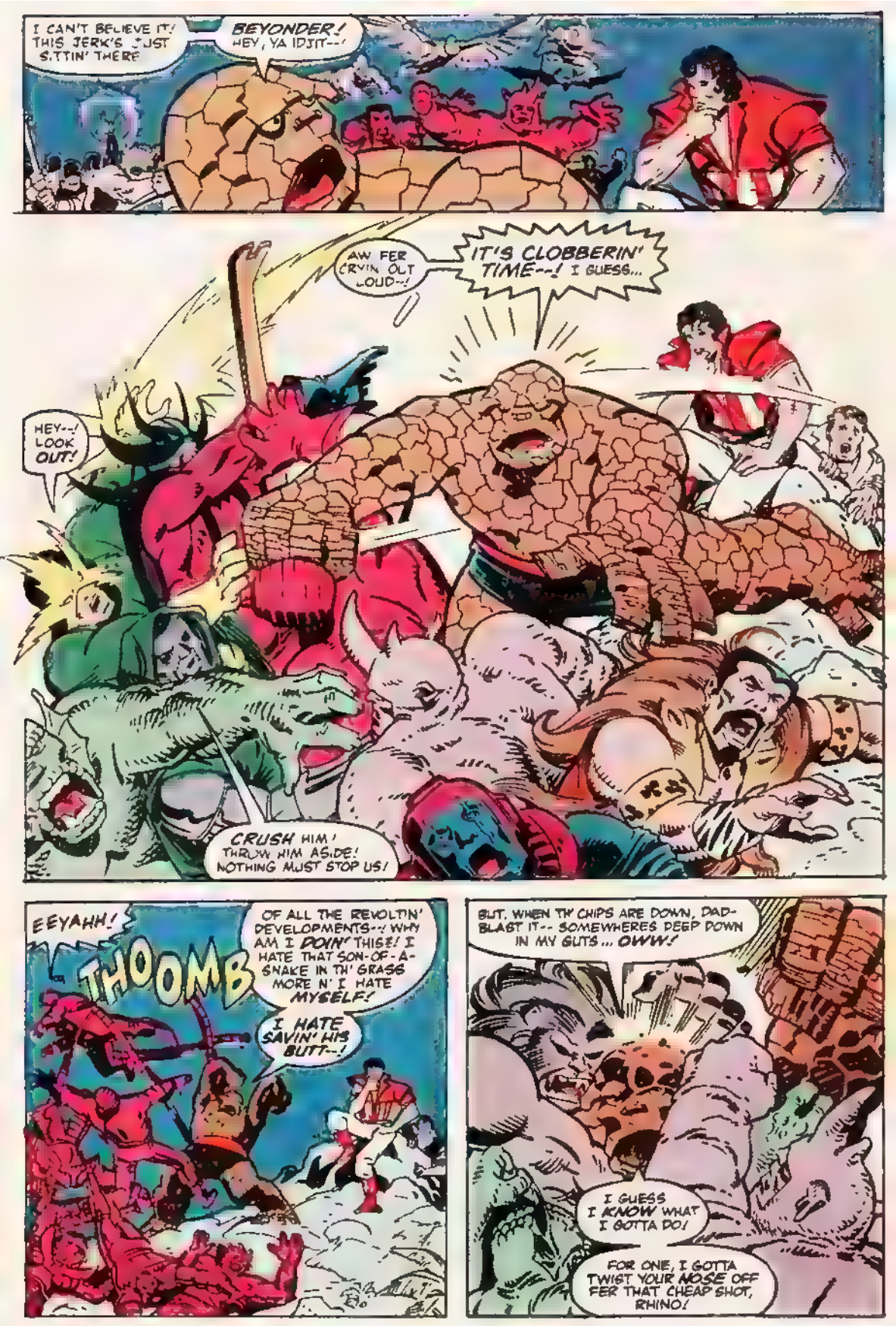

I'M COMIN' FER YOU, BEYONDER!
THOOM!
KERWRAKK!


DO YOU HEAR? YER BUTT IS MINE, SCUZZ-BALL!

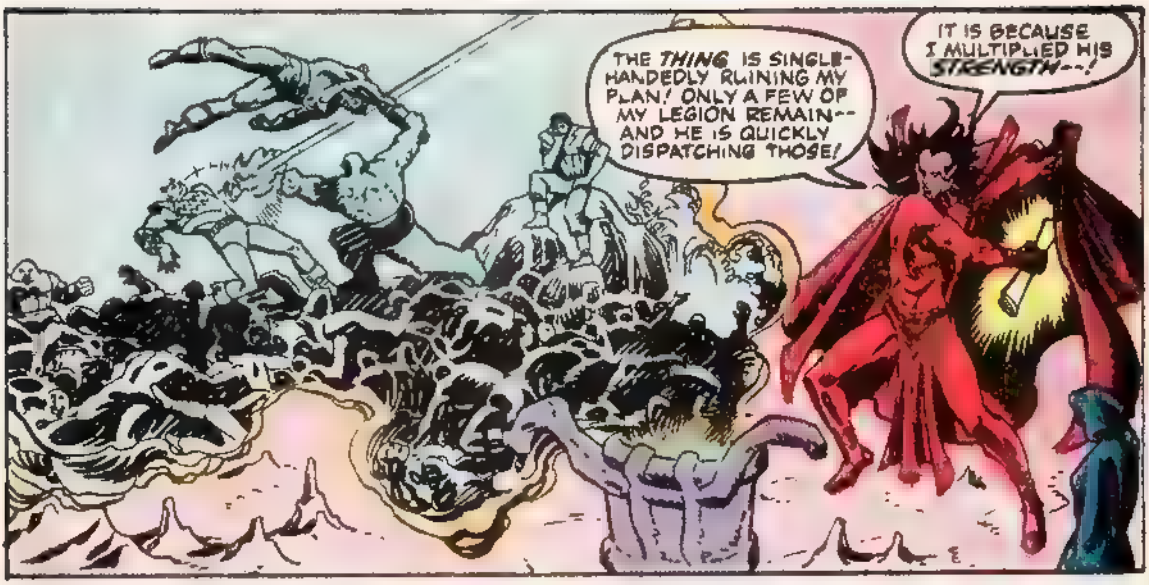

I'M GOIN' TO KILL YA... FOR ALICIA / YER COLD MEAT, BEYONDER!
OH... MY... LORD...
CAN WE TALK ABOUT THIS, THING?

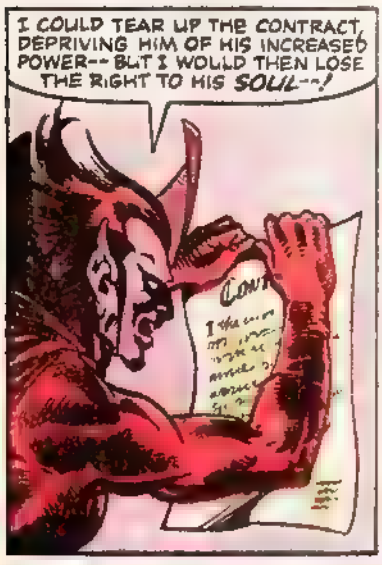
NO!
WHAMM!
NOW, STAND UP AN' FIGHT, MISTER OR
NO!
NO?
WELL, THEN I'LL KILL YOU WHERE YOU SIT, JERK!
HEY-- I THOUGHT YOU WERE ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS!
I WUZ... NOW I AIN'T SURE ANYMORE! I MEAN, I WANT HIM DEAD-- AN' I AIN'T GONNA BE DENIED, BUT...
INTERESTING.. IF ONE SUCH AS YOU CAN HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT HIS ROLE, THEN PERHAPS IT'S NOT SO TERRIBLE THAT I DO!
HOLD IT! WHY DON'T WE ALL JUST SIT DOWN AND THINK ABOUT THIS! WHAT DO YOU SAY?
JUST THEN, BELOW..
THE SANDS HAVE RUN OUT! TIME IS CRITICAL NOW! BUT ALL IS, AT LAST, READY!
LEGION ACCURSED--! ATTACK!
BEHOLD! DEEPLY ENTHRALLED, THEY RUSH TOWARD THEIR DESTINY JOYOUSLY, FERVENTLY!
HAH! WHETHER THE BEYONDER MOWS THEM DOWN AS A CHILD FELLS HIS LEADEN SOLDIERS OR HE SITS PASSIVELY AND THEY LAY HANDS UPON HIM, EITHER WAY, THE CIRCUIT WILL BE COMPLETED--!
THEN ETERNITY AND BEYONDERS-BANE WILL WREAK THEIR MURDEROUS FURY!
COME, BELOVED! WE MUST REPAIR TO MY REALM, AND SAFETY-- LEST WE GET CAUGHT IN THE IMMINENT CATACLYSM!

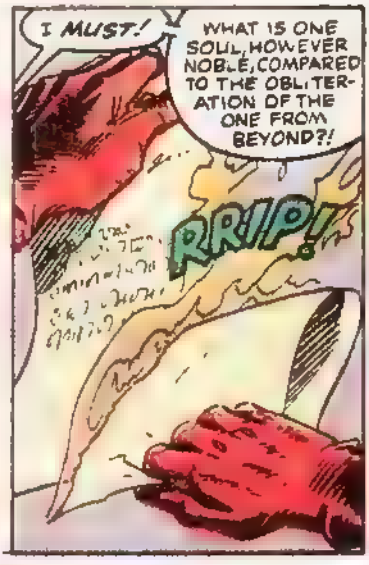
AND, AS THE LEGION ACCURSED BURSTS ONTO THE SURFACE...
THERE'S THE BEYONDER!
GET HIM! KILL HIM!
MOTHER McCREE--! WHERE'D THEY COME FROM?
DEATH TO THE BEYONDER! RIP HIM APART!
THEY--THEY WANNA OFF THE BEYONDER!
JUST LIKE ME...
DO I BEAT 'EM TO IT--? OR HELP 'EM? OR...
WHAT AM I, THAT ENTIRE ARMIES ATTACK ME, THOUGH I AM SIMPLY SITTING AND THINKING? AM I SO MONSTROUS--?
IF SO, SHOULD I NOT JUST ALLOW THEM TO SLAY ME, PUTTING AN END TO MY MISERY--AND THEIR FEAR?
I COULD DESTROY THEM, OF COURSE, AND BE THE NIGHTMARE THEY THINK I AM!
OR I SUPPOSE I COULD JUST TELEPORT AWAY...
STAY, INTERLOPER! YOU MUST STAY! FIGHT--! OR GO GENTLE INTO DEATH! BUT, PLEASE, DO NOT FLEE! THIS CHANCE WILL COME TO ME BUT ONCE!
AND, YET, THINK--! IF HE STAYS, BUT SURVIVES THE ATTEMPT..!
SO... AFTER ALL THESE EONS, I, MEPHISTO... KNOW FEAR!
DEATH AWAITS..
ETERNITY STANDS READY...
THE MIGHTY OF THE MULTIVERSE TREMBLE...
AND, IN SUBURBAN DENVER...
THE ANSWER'S "DONALD DUCK," OWIE! YOU KNEW THAT! EVERYBODY KNOWS THAT!
YEAH...I'M JUST...HAVING TROUBLE CONCENTRATING ON THE GAME! SORRY!


I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THIS JERK'S JUST S.TTIN' THERE
BEYONDER! HEY, YA IDJIT--!
AW FER CRYIN OUT LOUD--!
IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME--! I GUESS...
HEY--! LOOK OUT!
CRUSH HIM! THROW HIM ASIDE! NOTHING MUST STOP US!
EEYAHH!
THOOMB
OF ALL THE REVOLTIN' DEVELOPMENTS--! WHY AM I DOIN' THISE! I HATE THAT SON-OF-A-SNAKE IN TH' GRASS MORE N' I HATE MYSELF!
I HATE SAVIN' HIS BUTT--!
BUT, WHEN TH' CHIPS ARE DOWN, DAD-BLAST IT-- SOMEWHERES DEEP DOWN IN MY GUTS... OWW!
I GUESS I KNOW WHAT I GOTTA DO!
FOR ONE, I GOTTA TWIST YOUR NOSE OFF FER THAT CHEAP SHOT, RHINO!

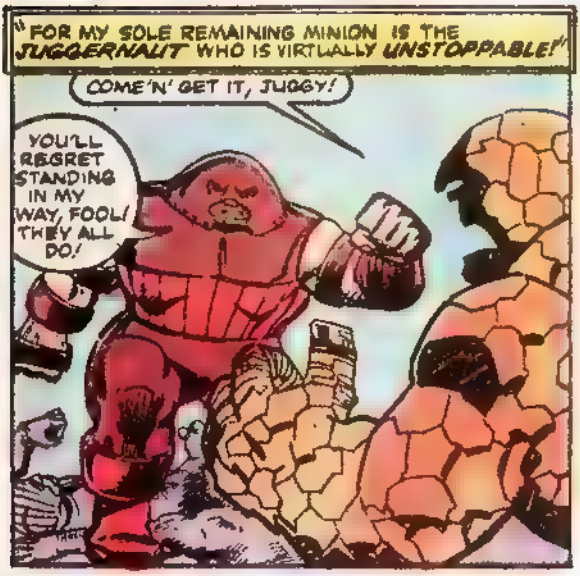
CONSIDERIN' THE ODDS I'M DOIN' BETTER N I SHOULD! HOWCUM I'M SO STRONG ALL A TH SUDDEN--? UNLESS THAT DREAM I HAD WUZ NAH!
HE CAN'T STOP US! ATTACK!
DEATH TO--E BE WONDER
UH-OH! THEY GOT AIR SUPPORT! WHERE'S HERTNEKY WHEN I NEED HIM?
THE MOMENT IS AT HAND!
HEY, ABSORBIN' MAN! C MERE!
YOU IDIOT! AS SOON AS YOU TOUCH ME I GET YOUR POWERS!
GREAT! SO YOU'LL MAKE AN EVEN BETTER SURFACE TO-AIR MISSILE!
THWUDD!
HEY SORRY FOR THIS CRUDE TECHNIQUE, FLYBOY'S BUT I AIN'T GOT AN ACK-ACK GUN HANDY!
NO-O-O-O NO!!

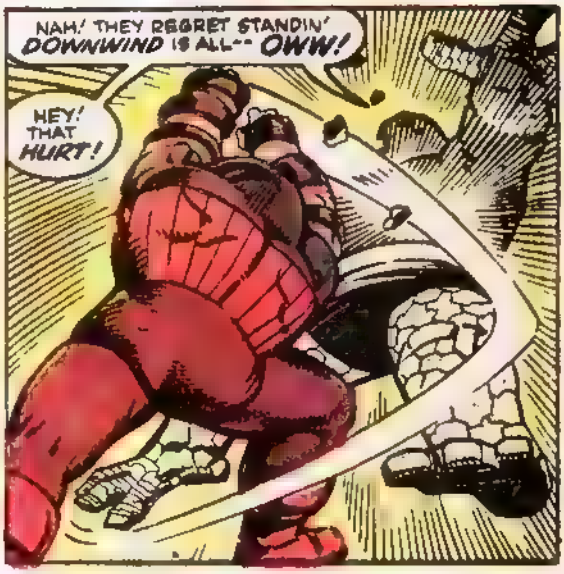

THE THING IS SINGLE-HANDEDLY RUINING MY PLAN! ONLY A FEW OF MY LEGION REMAIN--AND HE IS QUICKLY DISPATCHING THOSE!
IT IS BECAUSE I MULTIPLIED HIS STRENGTH--!


I COULD TEAR UP THE CONTRACT, DEPRIVING HIM OF HIS INCREASED POWER--BUT I WOULD THEN LOSE THE RIGHT TO HIS SOUL--!


I MUST!
WHAT IS ONE SOUL, HOWEVER NOBLE, COMPARED TO THE OBLITERATION OF THE ONE FROM BEYOND?!
RRIP!

IT IS DONE!
NOW THE THING SHALL SURELY BE SWEPT ASIDE--


"FOR MY SOLE REMAINING MINION IS THE JUGGERNAUT WHO IS VIRTUALLY UNSTOPPABLE!"
COME'N' GET IT, JUGGY!
YOU'LL REGRET STANDING IN MY WAY, FOOL! THEY ALL DO!


NAH! THEY REGRET STANDIN' DOWNWIND IS ALL-- OWW!
HEY! THAT HURT!

KATHOOM!
THBOOM!
SO MUCH FOR HIS INTERFERENCE! NOW..
NOW!
WHEN TH' GOIN' GETS TOUGH... TH' TOUGH GET GOIN'...
I...F...YA THINK YA CAN...YA CAN!
I...WILL... NOT...BE... DENIED!
HEY!
OH, NO! NO-O!

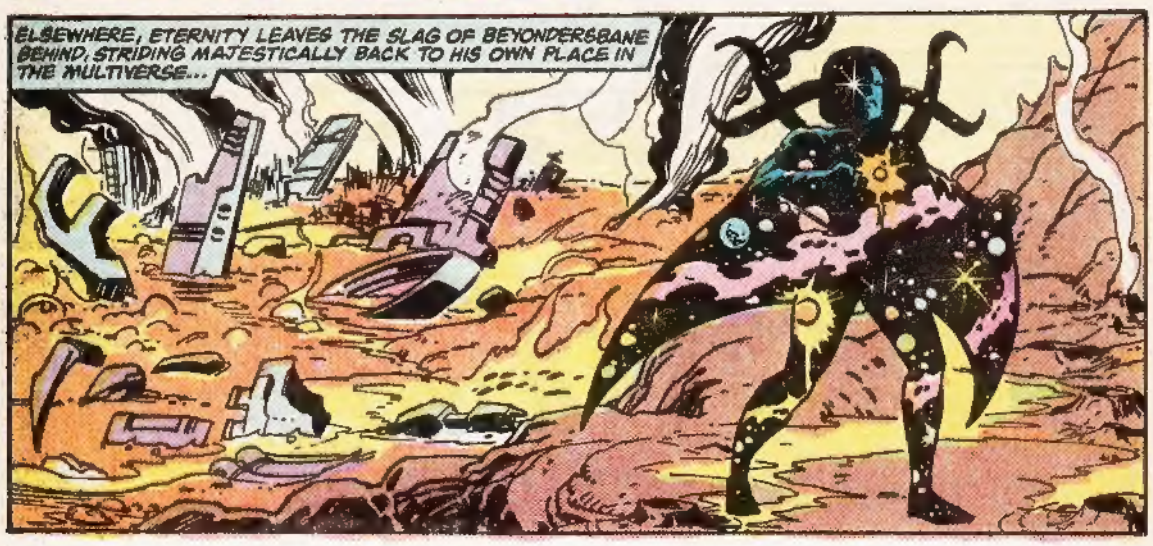
KERWHAMM!
UHH!
HURRY, CRETIN!
THE MELT-DOWN IS BEGINNING!
HEY... WHY'D JUGGY STOP? HE COULD'A GOT BACK UP AN' I COULDN'T'A LIFTED ANOTHER FINGER--!
EVEN INT'RESTINER, EVERYBODY'S GLOWIN'!
WELL, I'LL BE--!
AND, AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE DEPTHS OF MEPHISTO'S EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL DOMAIN--
--THE MIGHTY ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION CALLED BEYONDERSBANE IS CONSUMED BY THE UNCONTAINABLE POWER WITHIN!
BLINDING, SEARING CLOUDS OF UNIMAGINABLE ENERGY BILLOW OUTWARD, VAPORIZING VAST AREAS OF THE STYGIAN REALM AS THEY DISSIPATE INTO THE VERY FABRIC OF THE MULTIVERSE--
--TO SEEP BACK, EVENTUALLY INTO THE BODY OF THE ONE FROM BEYOND WHENCE THEY CAME!

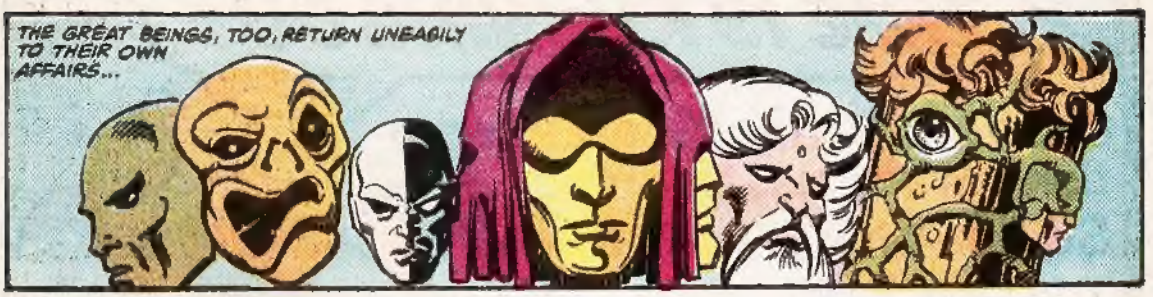
IT IS... ENDED! BEYONDERSBANE IS BUT SLAG! AT THE MOMENT OF FAILURE, THOSE OF THE LEGION RETURNED WHENCE THEY CAME, THEIR COVENANTS RENDERED NULL AND VOID!

OUR ONE CHANCE, BELOVED... HAS PASSED!
BELOVED?!

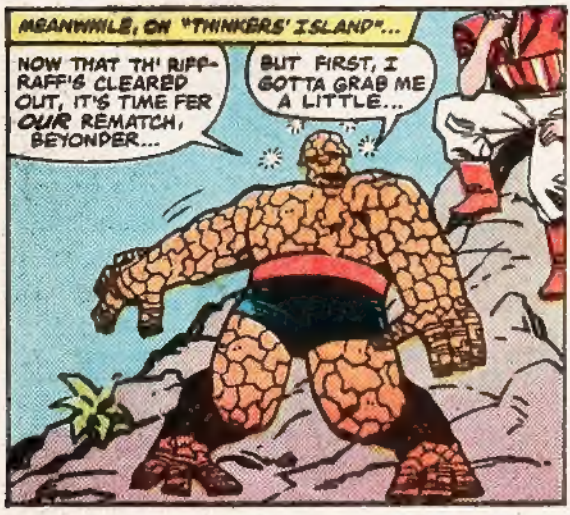
HAS IT COME TO THIS?! THAT MEPHISTO, LORD OF PAIN, MUST SUFFER THE BITTER AGONY OF FAILURE AND FUTILITY!
DEATH MY DARLING, DO NOT DESERT ME NOW! COME BACK! COME BACK!

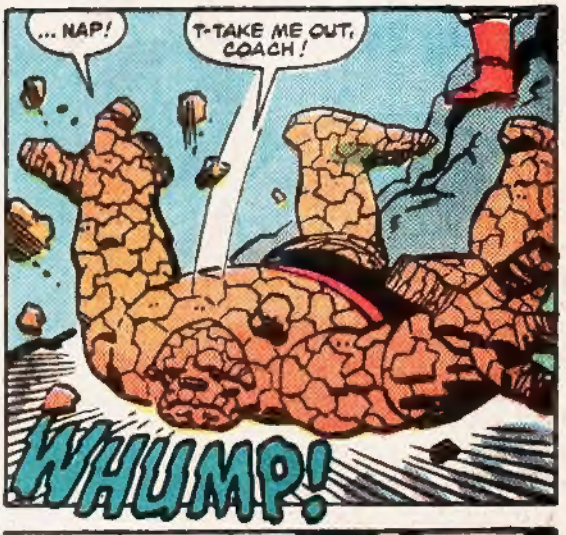
AND, AT THAT MOMENT IN THE PITS--
--FOR A MOMENT, THE WRETCHED FORGET THEIR OWN PAIN...
H-HOW... COMFORTING!


ELSEWHERE, ETERNITY LEAVES THE SLAG OF BEYONDERSBANE BEHIND, STRIDING MAJESTICALLY BACK TO HIS OWN PLACE IN THE MULTIVERSE...



AND, IN DENVER...
YOU GUYS READY FOR ANOTHER GAME, OR WHAT?
OWIE... WHAT DO YOU THINK?
IS EVERYTHING OKAY?
THE CRISIS HAS PASSED! FOR... NOW... BUT I ALMOST WISH IT HADN'T, MARSHA! 'C-CAUSE I'M AFRAID IT'S GOING TO END UP INVOLVING ME!
WHY CAN'T IT ALL JUST GO AWAY?


MEANWHILE, ON "THINKERS' ISLAND"...
NOW THAT TH' RIFF-RAFF'S CLEARED OUT, IT'S TIME FER OUR REMATCH, BEYONDER...
BUT FIRST, I GOTTA GRAB ME A LITTLE...



I JUST THOUGHT OF SOMETHING!
WHILE I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT MY ROLE IN THE MULTIVERSE, APPARENTLY I CAUSED A WHOLE BUNCH OF PEOPLE TO FIND THEIRS!
ESPECIALLY BEN! JUST BY SITTING HERE I FORCED HIM TO REALIZE WHAT HIS TRUE ESSENCE IS--A DEFENDER OF LIFE! A HERO, NOT A MURDERER!

MAYBE THAT'S IT! MAYBE MY TRUE ROLE IS TO TEACH ALL THE OTHER BEINGS IN EXISTENCE WHAT THEIR TRUE ROLES ARE!
I THINK I'M ON TO SOMETHING HERE!

NEXT: The story continues in **New Mutants #36** in which the Beyonder's attempt to rid *Magik* of her *Darkchilde* side leads to disastrous consequences!

And in **The Amazing Spider-Man #273**, the *Puma* enlists *Spider-Man* in an attempt to assassinate the Beyonder!

And in **X-Men #202** the Beyonder imbues Rachel with power cosmic that dwarfs her own *Phoenix* powers—and then gives her the opportunity to atone for her mother's sins and her own! You must not miss this!

In **Defenders #152**—the *final issue*—the Defenders meet their ultimate fate in awesome combat! What else do you need to know?

And in **The Spectacular Spider-Man #111**, the Beyonder helps the *Puma* to find his true purpose in life—though it means the *Beyonder's* own death! Can *Spider-Man* save him? *Should* he?

One month from now, the threads of our tale are gathered again in **Secret Wars II #9**, which guest stars *The X-Men* (in full-fledged *battle* against the Beyonder), *Spider-Man*, the *Hulk*, and the *New Mutants*! Be here for . . .

BETRAYAL!